Purandara dasaru and Ganapathi.

The following story appeared in “Haridasabharathi” in an issue dated July 1959. The editor/publisher of this wonderful journal was the late revered Sri Haridasarathnam Gopaladasaru, whom I had the good fortune to meet and who has been my Guru in many ways. The original in Kannada written in his own inimitable style is far more enjoyable. But my summarised English rendering for the perusal of others who are non-kannadigas may still be of some value. The story which brings out the concept of JIva Taratamya and the greatness of the two divine entities is given briefly here.

This journal which was maintained for about 11 years by the illustrious Gopala Dasaru, with scanty help from the public, is a source of great information on Dasa sahithya as well as such anecdotes. Sri Gopaladasaru himself was an avid collector of manuscripts, folk lore and was an authority on the subject, who lived a simple, frugal life according to the tenets of Dasas and contributed greatly for the preservation of this treasure. His house in Kogilu near Yelahanka is presently looked after by his two sons who have also been following the foot steps of their great father. The Vrindavana containing Mritthika of Sri Vijayadasaru from Chippagiri is also worshipped there regularly. There is a crying need to encourage such efforts to not only print past issues of the journal in an abbreviated form but also to gather all such precious information which will be lost irretrievably, if not done. It is also interesting that Sri Ganapathi himself incarnated as Sri Gopala Dasaru, the direct and favourite shishya of Sri Vijaya Dasaru, who made the unmatched sacrifice of giving away 40 years of life at his master’s desire to Sri Jagannatha Dasaru – we would not have had the great Harikathamruthasara otherwise.

Khandoba was a great devotee of Ganapathi, who used to receive offerings directly from him. Naturally he was very proud of his closeness to the divinity, who has always been widely revered in Maharashtra. Once he invited Sri Purandara Dasaru along with his shishyas such as Appanna Bhagavata etc for Tirtha prasada and this was accepted. On the due date, the guests arrived in right time and were offered proper seats with due ceremony. One Plantain leaf was left blank and the next was offered to Sri Purandara Dasaru. After Gandha-Akshathee etc, just when the final Aposhana was to be given, Ganapathi himself came and was somewhat reluctant to sit in the vacant place. But on a slight sign from Dasaru, he sat and the meal was partaken with great happiness by all. Sri Dasaru said to Khandoba – “I must thank you for giving me the honour of sitting next to MahaGanapathi himself. If you had told me earlier, I would have enjoyed the occasion even more”. Khandoba said with pride that the great god has blessed him and once in a while accepted his request to come personally”.

A few days passed. Sri Dasaru in turn, invited Khandoba with his disciples to his house for Tirtha Prasada. He said – “We are poor, but we are heartily inviting you to accept the hospitality of this poor Dasa”. Khandoba accepted with grace and on the appointed day and time came to the house where Sri Dasaru was staying. He was wearing golden rings, a ornamental shawl and carried a silver Thambige. He was received with due honour and was offered Gandha-Akshathe as usual. Khandoba, who thought very highly of himself was curious to know whether Sri Dasaru could also repeat his achievement. He asked him to invite his own deity for food. Sri Dasaru told him that his deity will come later when he takes

his food and hence Khandoba should start his Bhojana. Sri Dasaru went on explaining the significance of taking the food with its immanent forms of God etc. In the meanwhile, Khandoba heard the voice of the lady of the house asking for some well sliced fire wood to be brought into the kitchen. A voice of a shishya was also heard – “I am just bringing it”. Khandoba was perplexed as he recognised the voice as that of his own deity Ganapathi. He asked Sri Dasaru – Is it the voice of Ganapathi. Sri Dasaru replied: “Yes. We had to arrange this meal in a hurry and my wife told Ganapathi yesterday to slice the wood properly and keep it ready for today. Since then, Ganapathi has been engaged in this work as it the service of Purandara Vittala”.

Just at that time Ganapathi came there in one bound and told Khandoba: “Yes, Khandoba, I am your deity, but Sri Purandara Dasaru is the incarnation of the divine Singer Narada with eternal avesha of Sri Mukya Prana Himself. All of us are nothing compared to Purandara Vittala”. Khandoba’s eyes were opened to the greatness of Sri Dasaru and the principles of Gradation and he became a great Bhagavatha himself.